

The Role of Kisan Kirti Party in National Movement

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Various factors and influences contributed to the emergence of the Kirti Kisan party. The Hijrat Movement, the Russian revolution 1917, the Gandhi policy of Swaraj, economic and social condition of Punjab. The formation of the Kirti Kisan party in 1927 provided further impetus to the growth of the revolutionary movement in Punjab. The Kirti had the direct contact with the Communist international and received its support.

The Kirti -Kisan, it tried to bring about a new awakening among the workers, peasants and the intelligentsia by disseminating Marxist ideas. It tried to unite them on the basis of an economic programme and on the lines of class struggle in the latter phase. The Kisan -Kirti party concentrated on practical work and launched agitation in support of some of the progressive demands of the peasantry such as abolition of 'nazrana' and reduction in land revenue, water tax and the like. It was successful in organising a strong peasant movement in the state on the basis of these demands. In this process, it extended the freedom movement to the villages and helped the congress to penetrate the rural areas.

Introduction-

The Kirti Kisan Party begins with its emergence through a gradual process. The political, economic and social condition in the Punjab was responsible for the emergence of the party. The leaders of the party first decide to explain to the masses as to why and what for the party was needed. Its organizers were highly impressed by the Russian revolution and formed the party to achieve similar aims, they apprised the people of their miseries and made them conscious and aware of the fact the Kirti Kisan party represented the poor peasants and landless labourers in Punjab. Literally the words 'kirti' means the toiler the party de-

defined a kirti as a person who performed his work with his own hands and did not exploit others¹.

Although there were a number of factors for the emergence of the Kirti Kisan party. The most significant contribution to the propagation of socialist and communist ideology in the Punjab was made by former Gadar party leaders who underwent ideological re-orientation and linked the destiny of their imperialist struggle in India in the twenties with the world working class revolutionary movement.² Before the Russian revolution, socialism was only an idea but the success of socialist revolution in Russia led the downtrodden people of the world

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to look toward the new Russia for inspiration for emancipation. The success of Russian revolution gave a new dimension to the Kirti Kisan party³

The foundation of the movement laid by a group of young Muslims called Muhajirs (migrants) who left India for Turkey under the influence of the Khilafat movement⁴. The programme of the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi non-co-operation movement organized the aim was to attain Swaraj within the shortest possible time "Swaraj within a year" Although the non-co-operation movement failed to achieve Swaraj within a year was promised to the people by Gandhi its most remarkable result was the shift of political emphasis from the elite to the newly awakened masses⁵ peasantry of Punjab was in debt, economic condition of peasantry not satisfactory

OBJECTIVES

1. The study the causes responsible for the commencement of The Kirti Kisan Party
2. To analyse the programme of the Kirti
3. To analyse the economic and Political role of Kirti Kisan party in Punjab

THE "KIRTI" JOURNAL

Rattan Singh, while still in America, had suggested the starting of the Kirti and in his first letter wrote "---the business could only be successful if the Kirti was successful we are trying to send money soon for this paper. In January 1926 the Kirti was advertised as follows: "This journal will be the voice of Indian workers in America and Canada and will be dedicated to the sacred memory of those heroes and martyrs who awakened sleeping India --- and whose ideal was regarded by our own people as well by out-

siders as the dream of Alinschar. The journal will sympathise with all the workers throughout the world--- the subjugated, weak and oppressed nation and subjugated India. In February following the first issue appeared, bearing on its title page the picture of a dead labourer lying on his funeral pyre, amidst factories etc. the scene of his labours when alive and surrounded with tools such as hammer and pickaxe. The whole obviously intended to convey the idea that the deceased had succumbed to the hard task he had to perform during his lifetime.⁶

In February 1926 the first issue of the Kirti was published. The journal bore on its title page the picture of Kirti placing a garland of flowers on the dead body of revolutionary hero. Outlining the policy of the Kirti, Santokh Singh its editor, wrote a long article criticising the Congress policy of attaining Swaraj within one year by spinning yarn and boycotting British cloth.⁷

KIRTI KISAN PARTY

In Sept. 1927, The Kirti informed its readers that a Kirti conference would be held in Hoshiarpur on the 6th & 7th Oct. 1927 under the presidency of Sohan Singh Josh in which the problems of Kirti would be discussed.⁸ On the invitation of S.S. Josh and Bhag Singh Canadian a meeting to organize the workers and peasants was.

Called on 12 April 1928 (6p.m.) in the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar from different districts more than 60 persons it was unanimously resolved that a party named Kirti Kisan Party may be established in order to organize the workers and peasants and those who were attending this meeting should be considered its members. Sohan Singh Josh elected secretary Kirti Kisan Party was formed to facilitate open work

among this grass- root level of society. Its leadership was drawn from the Lahore and Amritsar group of revolutionaries. The Kirti's had direct contact with the communist International and received its support In the initial stage. The kirti, it tried to bring about a new awakening among the workers, peasants and the intelligent by disseminating Marxist ideas. It tried to unite them on the basis of an economic programme and on the lines of class struggle In the latter phase the Kirti Kisan Party concentrated on practical work and launched agitation in support of some of the progressive demand of the Peasantry such as abolition of Nazrana' and reduction in land revenue water tax and the like. It was successful in organizing a strong peasant movement in the state on the basis of these demands in this process. It extended the freedom movement to the village and helped the congress to penetrate the rural area¹⁰

Programme of Kirti's – it is scattered in various issues of Kirti(monthly) and can be summed in the following items.

1. All means of production should be nationalized
2. Land should be taken away from the landlord without compensation and it should be divided among the cultivators.
3. The revenue should be reduced. It should be imposed on production and no land. On small holding there should be no revenue at all.
4. The wages of the industrial workers should be increase working time should not be more than 8 hours
5. Government should give loans to the cultivators. It should also open department

which should provide the peasant with machines seeds department assistance.

6. Village Panchayat should be re-organized and they should include the elected representatives of cultivator and other rural workers. They should be ensured with authority to impose revenue on the peasant

7. Establishment of a Kirti's or Balshevik Type state¹¹

The activities of Kirti Kisan Party and the Naujawan Bharat Sabha promoted the left consciousness of the people in Punjab. This consciousness was reflected in the conspicuous participation of worker and peasant in the massive public demonstration against the Simon Commission which it arrived Lahore in oct. 1928.¹²

The increasing left orientation of the people constituted a real danger to the government the capitalist and the feudal landlord. In order to crush the rising communist led mass movement, the government arrested the worker the peasant and the youth leaders in the Meerut conspiracy case Sohan Singh josh. Abdul Majid and Kedarnath Sehgal were arrested in March 1929 Besides, the government also decide to pass the public safety bill and the trade dispute bill to curb the communist activities in India to demonstrate the people's protest against these two Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha threw bomb in the Central Assembl on 8 April 1929. They did not try to escape the stood in the visitor gallery. Shouting slogan of "Inquilab Zindabad"(Long live revolution) which subsequently became the battle cry of all militant element. They were arrested and the Lahore conspiracy case was launched against them¹³

CONCLUSION :

The Kirti Kissan Party played a monumental role in the inscination of leftist, secular, ideas in Punjab. The indoctrination of youth there of youth, their training in the ideology was carried out few year with success. The Kirti a Lal Jhanda publication also provided enlighten to the masses in Punjab on key issues like the grass-root problem of the peasantry and labour and also suggested an alternative line of action from that

proposed by the Gandhian Philosophy and Indian National Congress and issue like swaraj & independence.

It lost track when it shifted its focus from clear local & National issues to support of Russia's during the world war 2nd its commitment to fatherland Russia & its ideology weakened its stances standing in India. The Kirti kisan Party role in the establishment & consolidation of leftist ideology in Punjab & India can never be overlooked or undermined

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